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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VATICAN 006604

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DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUTI), AF/E (RAAD)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/06

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [SU](#) [PHUM](#) [SU](#) [VT](#) [VTPREL](#)

SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY DANFORTH DISCUSSES BACK-CHANNEL TALKS WITH SANT'EGIDIO, VATICAN FM

REF: VATICAN 5845

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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR JIM NICHOLSON, REASON E.O.
12958 1.5(B,D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: S/E DANFORTH AND DELEGATION DISCUSSED STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD SUDAN PEACE PROCESS 12/20 WITH SANT'EGIDIO COMMUNITY AFRICA SPECIALISTS FABIO RICCARDI AND DON MATTEO ZUPPI. RICCARDI PROPOSED CONFIDENTIAL TALKS BETWEEN TRUSTED SENIOR GOS AND SPLM REPRESENTATIVES AT A LOCATION OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT, PERHAPS AT SANT'EGIDIO'S HEADQUARTERS. DANFORTH AND GROUP TOOK SUGGESTION ON BOARD WITHOUT MAKING ANY COMMITMENTS. LATER MEETING WITH VATICAN FM TAURAN, S/E BRIEFED ON HIS SUDAN MISSION, AND TAURAN EXPLAINED VATICAN VIEW OF SUDAN AS THREAT TO CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) S/E DANFORTH, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT OAKLEY, AF/E JEFF MILLINGTON AND SUDAN DESK OFFICER RAAD VISITED SANT'EGIDIO HEADQUARTERS IN ROME 12/20 ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR NICHOLSON AND EMBASSY VATICAN OFFICERS. S/E DANFORTH BRIEFED THE SANT'EGIDIO REPS ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE REGION, UNDERSCORING THE FOUR POINTS HE HAD PROPOSED AS CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES. HE SAID HE WAS STRUCK THAT PEOPLE IN THE GOS ARE ALMOST PATHOLOGICALLY DISHONEST. AS IN REFTTEL, SANT'EGIDIO'S SUDAN SPECIALIST, FABIO RICCARDI, PRESENTED HIS IDEA OF A CONFIDENTIAL OFF-SITE MEDIATION TO MOVE THE SUDAN PEACE PROCESS FORWARD.

3. (C) RICCARDI AGREED WITH S/E DANFORTH THAT THE
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GOS TOO OFTEN WILL MAKE ASSURANCES THAT IT HAS NO INTENTION OF KEEPING. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. NOW HAS STRONG CARDS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE GOS WISHES AFTER SEPTEMBER 11 TO PROVE IT'S ANTI-TERRORIST BONAFIDES AND, MOREOVER, USE ITS PROSPECTIVE OIL WEALTH TO BRING THE COUNTRY MORE FULLY INTO THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. THEY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO THAT SO LONG AS THEY HAVE AN ACTIVE INSURGENCY TO WHICH THEY REACT BY BOMBING CIVILIANS. RICCARDI SAID GARANG IS PERPETUATING THE CONFLICT BY SUSTAINING MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE GOS. HE WONDERED WHETHER GARANG HAS IT IN HIMSELF TO STOP THE FIGHTING. HE SHARED MILLINGTON'S FEAR THAT GARANG, LIVING COMFORTABLY OUTSIDE OF SUDAN, MAY BE HAPPY TO SEE THE FIGHTING CONTINUE INDEFINITELY.

4. (C) RICCARDI CONTINUED THAT DURING HIS RECENT KHARTOUM VISIT HE HAD DISCUSSED HIS IDEA OF DIRECT AND CONFIDENTIAL TALKS AT SANT'EGIDIO'S ROME HEADQUARTERS WITH SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE GOS, WHO ENDORSED IT IN PRINCIPAL. HE SOUGHT USG HELP TO PERSUADE SPLM LEADER GARANG TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL. IN RESPONSE TO MILLINGTON'S CONCERN THAT THE PARTIES MIGHT USE SUCH A PROCESS TO CUT A DEAL BETWEEN THEMSELVES THAT WOULDN'T RESPECT THE PRINCIPLES SUCH AS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INHERENT IN IGAD, RICCARDI SAID THAT THAT IS WHY THERE WAS NEED FOR A MEDIATOR. SANT'EGIDIO COULD BE COUNTED ON TO ENSURE AT THE RIGHT MOMENT THAT THOSE PRINCIPLES ARE MADE PART OF THE MEDIATION. IN RESPONSE TO S/E DANFORTH'S QUERY, RICCARDI CLARIFIED THAT HE WAS
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PROPOSING BACK-CHANNEL TALKS TOWARDS A POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT FOR GARANG AND THE SPLM/SPLA TO HAVE A ROLE IN A POST-CONFLICT GOS.

5. (C) DON MATTEO INTERJECTED THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A FRAMEWORK BOTH TO ENGAGE GARANG AND TO PROTECT HIM FROM BECOMING CO-OPTED BY THE GOS WITHOUT OBTAINING ANY REAL FREEDOMS FOR HIS PEOPLE. IGAD COULD BE THE FRAMEWORK FOR A FINAL AGREEMENT, BUT A MEDIATED CONFIDENTIAL NEGOTIATION WOULD BE

NECESSARY TO ELICIT CONCRETE ELEMENTS OF THE COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE WARRING SIDES. THE TALKS SHOULD NOT BE BETWEEN AL-BASHIR AND GARANG, BUT BETWEEN TRUSTED SENIOR LIEUTENANTS -- ASSUMING WE CAN OVERCOME GARANG'S MISTRUST OF HIS LIEUTENANTS. WE SHOULDN'T EXPECT QUICK RESULTS EITHER; THE MOZAMBIQUE TALKS WENT ON FOR OVER TWO YEARS, THE FIRST YEAR OF WHICH WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE TWO SIDES TO BEGIN TO BUILD TRUST.

16. (C) RICCARDI THOUGHT THAT GARANG HIMSELF COULD PARTICIPATE IF, IN THE END, NOBODY ELSE COULD BE IDENTIFIED TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE SPLM. RICCARDI SAID THAT FOR THIS FORMULA TO WORK, GARANG MUST BE PERSUADED THAT MOVING FORWARD DOESN'T THREATEN HIM. RICCARDI BELIEVED THAT THE U.S. HAS STRONG INFLUENCE OVER GARANG; IF THE USG URGED HIM TO

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	VCE-00	DCP-01
	NSAE-00	CAEX-01	EPAE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02
	SAS-00	/004W					

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FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
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INFO IGAD COLLECTIVE

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ATTEND OR SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO AN OFF-SITE MEDIATION, GARANG WOULDQ SANT'EGIDIO HAD ALREADY
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ASKED HIM BUT HE HADN'T RESPONDED.

17. (C) S/E DANFORTH THANKED RICCARDI FOR HIS VIEWS AND PROMISED TO KEEP THEM IN MIND AS HE DISCUSSED THE PEACE PROCESS WITH OTHER PLAYERS. HE UNDERScoreD THAT THE USG WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO SUPPORT ANOTHER PEACE INITIATIVE BECAUSE A PROLIFERATION OF INITIATIVES WOULD PROVIDE AN IRRESISTIBLE TEMPTATION FOR THE PARTIES TO GO "INITIATIVE SHOPPING" WITHOUT MOVING TOWARDS PEACE. NEVERTHELESS, RICCARDI HAD SOME INTERESTING IDEAS THAT COULD WELL BE INCORPORATED IF CONDITIONS ALLOWED.

18. (C) SUBSEQUENTLY S/E DANFORTH BRIEFED VATICAN FM ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE REGION AND EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PEACE. TAURAN, WHO IS NORMALLY THE DEFINITION OF TACITURNITY, WAS MOST ANIMATED IN AGREEING WITH DANFORTH ON THE PROBLEM OF PINNING GOS INTERLOCUTORS TO A TRUTHFUL STATEMENT. TAURAN SAID THE GOS WAS NOT TO BE TRUSTED -- IT THREATENED FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS. MOREOVER, HE IMPLIED, THE CONFLICT IN SUDAN WAS EMBLEMATIC OF A BROADER STRUGGLE BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY ACROSS THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. (NOTE: A SIMILAR VIEW WAS EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR EARLIER IN THE WEEK, DURING A VISIT WITH CARDINAL SEPE, PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH -- THE VATICAN'S MISSIONARY ORGANIZATION).

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19. (U) S/E DANFORTH DID NOT CLEAR THIS MESSAGE.
NICHOLSON

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